

Written Testimony Supporting

- H.B. No. 6884, An Act Concerning the Recruitment, Retention and Enhancement of the Teaching Profession

March 13, 2023

To Hon. Co-Chairs Representative Jeff Currey and Senator Douglass McCrory, Ranking Members McCarty, Kathleen M. and Senator Berthel, Eric C., and Distinguished Members:

My name is Zack Hayden and I am a resident of Westbrook, a father of two, and a teacher in an independent school in town. I have also served as a board of education member for the last five years for my local school district so I have seen first hand the threats that political opportunists, and largely unwitting warriors in the culture wars, pose to professionally developed curriculum and highly credentialed teachers. Teaching and curriculum design are not for laymen. School leaders are seasoned professionals who frequently possess multiple post graduate degrees and are constantly evaluating the learning taking place in their schools and should be supported in carrying out that difficult and important work. The recent attacks on public schools and teachers have seriously undermined the credibility of one of Connecticut's greatest assets, our schools.

It is important that we bolster Connecticut's efforts to recruit and retain teachers. The improvements outlined in HB 6884 help teaching remain a competitive option with other careers. Teachers need to know that their training, knowledge, and judgment can help them pick the right lessons for their class and the Teachers' Bill of Rights goes a long way to helping confirm that idea.

There are few professions that have the power to impact communities the way teachers do and I think HB 6884 is a necessary measure at this crucial time to support such a critical factor in what makes Connecticut a great place to live.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope that you support HB 6884.

Zachary Hayden, Westbrook, CT